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\$1

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21 theft cases reported last week



KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

File photo of the Department of Public Safety's headquarters in Supe.

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Last week alone, a total of 21 theft cases were recorded in the Department of Public Safety's police blotter—essentially a daily record of events compiled into a weekly report.

This was learned from DPS spokesperson Fred Sato, who said that, as part of DPS' goals, it has brought back weekly police blotter reports that will be shared with the community.

"I think it's important for the public to know what our officers are doing on a daily

See **THEFT** on Page 4

Deleon Guerrero receives national recognition as APAHE CEO awardee

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero has been recognized as a 2024 Chief Executive Officer awardee by the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher

Education board of directors.

APAHE is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the educational opportunities for Asian and Pacific American



DeLeon Guerrero

students; promoting and supporting the hiring, retention, and advancement of qualified Asian and Pacific American faculty, staff, and administrators;

See **AWARDEE** on Page 4

Travilla, Sapp cited for contempt again

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A House of Representatives special committee has found Robert Travilla and his business partner, Salina Sapp, on three separate contempt citations for refusing to answer any questions relating to the previous administration's Building Optimism, Opportunity, and Stability Together grant program.



Yumul



Flores

In response to *Saipan Tribune's* question, Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the Special Committee on Federal Assistance & Disaster-related Funding, said yesterday they found Travilla and Sapp in three separate contempt citations.

Travilla and Sapp are vice president and president of Nonstop Corp, respectively. Together with Shayne

See **TRAVILLA** on Page 4



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Acting Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Betty T. Terlaje talks during the CUC board meeting last Thursday about, among other things, their agreement to pay \$108,000 to settle a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency fine of \$162,000 against CUC for failing to timely fill critical positions.

» **CUC administration proposes \$115.8M for FY 2025—same amount in FY 2024**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has agreed to pay the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency \$108,000 to settle a \$162,000 fine for failing to timely fill critical vacant positions.

As this developed, the CUC admin-

See **CUC** on Page 4

INSIDE



LOCAL

The Pacific-Asia Travel Association Micronesia Chapter will hold its tri-annual general membership Meeting on March 13-15, 2024, on Saipan, the Marianas.

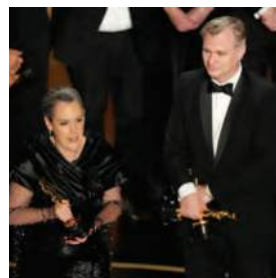
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BUSINESS

In an effort to address the ongoing challenges facing the CNMI, the 23rd Northern Marianas Legislature and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce have come together to establish a collaborative working group.

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LIFE & STYLE

"Oppenheimer," a solemn three-hour biopic that became an unlikely billion-dollar box-office sensation, was crowned best picture at a 96th Academy Awards that doubled as a coronation for Christopher Nolan.

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Local

Finance's motion to dismiss Torres' lawsuit is placed under advisement

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

Superior Court Judge *pro tem* Arthur Barcinas has taken under advisement the arguments of both parties regarding the Department of Finance's request to dismiss the petition filed by former governor Ralph DLG Torres that questioned the validity of the contract of special prosecutor James Kingman.

The department had sought to have the case dismissed for allegedly failing to state a claim. Torres' lawsuit revolves around the validity of Kingman's contract when he was initially hired to pursue the case against Torres as a special prosecutor. Kingman is now with the Office of the Attorney General as an assistant attorney general.

During a hearing yesterday, Barcinas said he will be taking the arguments of both parties under advisement and will soon issue a ruling.

Barcinas; Torres' lawyer, Anthony Aguon; and DOF's

lawyer, assistant attorney general Dustin Rollins, all appeared via video conference at the hearing.

Previously, the DOF, through Dustin Rollins, submitted a seven-page motion asking the Superior Court to dismiss Torres' petition, which is seeking judicial review of the department's decision regarding Kingman's initial contract.

In his petition, Rollins asked the court to affirm Finance's administrative order, which stated that it lacked authority to issue a declaratory order with regard to an existing contract.

"The petition must be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, because the DOF properly determined that it did not have authority to issue the declaratory ruling requested in the DOF petition," Rollins said.

Rollins argued that if agencies were required to issue declaratory rulings for determinations already made, theoretically, any per-

son, whether an interested party or not, would be entitled to request a ruling with respect to every contract ever entered into by the Commonwealth or any agency decision ever rendered.

"That, without question, would be an absurd result," he said.

Torres' petition comes af-

ter Finance Secretary Tract B. Norita declined to rule or address the merits of Torres' request for a declaratory ruling that finds Kingman's special prosecutor contract with the OAG invalid.

In addition, the agency ruling dismissed Torres' request, finding that the department lacks the authority

to issue a declaratory ruling because Kingman's contract had already been signed.

As relief, Torres asked the Superior Court to vacate the DOF's final agency decision on the grounds that the ruling was arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, and contrary to law. The defense also wants the

court to rule that the special prosecutor's contract fails to comply with procurement regulations and is void.

Alternatively, Torres asked that the court set aside the DOF's final agency ruling and remand the matter back to the agency for a decision on the merits of his request for declaratory relief.

Appeals court upholds ruling in alleged unlawful arrest

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has ruled in favor of the U.S. District Court for the NMI and upheld its decisions in the appeal filed by a man who had previously accused two police officers of unlawful arrest.

Back in February 2023, Nicholas Yarolfalchuw appealed to the Ninth Circuit, seeking to overturn the District Court's ruling that favored Department of Public Safety officers John Cabre-

ra and Danny Fitial, whom Yarolfalchuw had accused of unlawfully arresting him in 2022.

However, Ninth Circuit Judges Richard A. Paez, Milan D. Smith, and Lucy H. Koh issued a ruling last Friday that affirms the District Court's decision.

In its ruling, the Ninth Circuit judges stated that the district court did not err in granting the defendants' motion for summary judgment as Yarolfalchuw did not meet his burden to show that the alleged violation of his rights were clearly es-

tablished by law.

"Even if Yarolfalchuw's physical arrest was unlawful, no clearly established law put the officers on notice that arresting him between the hedges at the end of his driveway would constitute an arrest within the curtilage of his home," the judges said.

In addition, the Ninth Circuit judges said the district court properly exercised its discretion by enforcing deadlines in the scheduling order and ensuring that the plaintiff did not manipulate deadlines.

Back in January 2022, Yarolfalchuw, through attorney Joseph Horey, complained that Cabrera and Fitial unlawfully arrested him and deprived him of his civil rights.

Eleven months later, District Court Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona denied Yarolfalchuw's summary judgment motion and dismissed the lawsuit, ruling that there was no unlawful seizure.

Yarolfalchuw appealed the

decision in February 2022.

According to Yarolfalchuw's lawsuit, on May 10, 2021, he was sitting and talking with relatives at a pavilion within the premises where he resided when Cabrera drove inside the premises and parked beside the pavilion.

After a short discussion, Yarolfalchuw said he advised Cabrera that he was trespassing and told him to leave.

However, Cabrera did not leave and instead blocked the driveway to the residence.

Sometime after, Fitial arrived in another vehicle and, at the instruction of Cabrera, ordered Yarolfalchuw to put his hands behind his back. Fitial then put handcuffs on Yarolfalchuw and placed him in his vehicle.

Yarolfalchuw claims the officers did not have any warrant for either the search of the premises or his arrest. However, the officers claimed that they had probable cause to arrest Yarolfalchuw pursuant to a complaint they had received.

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 CHICKENANDBEER

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PSS celebrates Digital Learning Day and 21st Century Educator awardees

Four public school students were named winners of the 2024 Digital Learning Day competition of the CNMI Public School System in a special awarding ceremony held last Monday, March 4, at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

For the Early Elementary Level (kindergarten to grade 2), Attina Rosario, a second-grade student at Sinapalo Elementary School, won the top prize. She submitted a short essay and original drawing to showcase “How Technology Helps Me Learn.”

Oleai Elementary School 4th grade student Nevonie Camacho won the elementary level (3rd-5th grade category). She submitted a multimedia presentation on how technology helps her succeed in education.

Anthony Camacho, an 8th grader from Tanapag Middle School, was the winner for the middle school level. He submitted an original digital poster focused on the importance of digital citizenship.



The CNMI Public School System's 21st Century Educators awardees: Alvin Borja of San Vicente Elementary School, Baby Abegail Erickson of Tinian Elementary School, Joan Reyes of Da'ok Academy, Chanelle Manglona of Dr. Rita H. Inor Jr./Sr. High School, Yeji Lee of William S. Reyes Elementary School, Karen Camacho of Saipan Southern High School, Monica Pangelinan of Hopwood Middle School, Mack James of Sinapalo Elementary School, and Dr. Regina Palacios of Tinian Middle and High School.

The winner for the high school category was Kelly Zheng, an 11th grader from Marianas High School. Zheng submitted an original short video with multimedia inte-

gration that answers “How has technology helped me to become college and career-ready?”

Over 400 students participated in the competition,

showcasing the importance of technology in helping students become lifelong learners. Awardees were selected based on criteria such as student voice, creativity, and integration of multimedia.

Lorraine Catienza, director of the CNMI PSS Instructional Technology and Distance Education Office, said the competition was created to celebrate the role of technology in supporting learning and teaching, and promote the effective use of tech tools to improve the learning experience for all CNMI students.

The ceremony also recognized 10 distinguished edu-

cators from the district who demonstrate excellence as 21st Century Educators. The educators are: Joan Reyes from Da'ok Academy, Monica Pangelinan from Hopwood Middle School, Maria Onnes from Kagman High School, Chanelle Manglona from Dr. Rita H. Inos Jr./Sr. High School, Karen Camacho from Saipan Southern High School, Alvin Borja from San Vicente Elementary School, Mack James from Sinapalo Elementary School, Baby Abegail Erickson from Tinian Elementary School, Dr. Regina Palacios from Tinian Middle and High School, and Yeji Lee from William S.

Reyes Elementary School.

Board of Education chair Herman Atalig shared congratulatory remarks, stating, “The board extends sincere gratitude to all our students and teachers for their dedication to exceeding expectations and pushing the boundaries of learning. Their remarkable achievements serve as an inspiration to us all.”

Present at the event were members of the CNMI PSS Board of Education, key management, and school leaders who expressed their appreciation to all educators and students for their outstanding achievements. (PR)



PSS

From left, high school winner Kelly Zheng, 11th grader from Marianas High School; elementary winner Nevonie Camacho, 4th grader from Oleai Elementary School; early elementary winner Attina Rosario, 2nd grader from Sinapalo Elementary School; and middle school Winner Anthony Camacho, 8th grader from Tanapag Middle School.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEW HANMI BOARD

The Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands announces its 2024 board of directors officers on March 8, 2024, at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan following its monthly board meeting. From right, vice chair Ivan Quichocho (Century Hotel general manager), chair Dennis Seo (Pacific Islands Club Saipan general manager), secretary Clayton Darlington (Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan general manager), and board members Jim Arenovski (Island Training Solutions owner), Sachiko Gerrard (Aqua Resort Club Saipan general manager), and Martin Jambor (Kanoa Resort general manager).

Ogo responds to recent illegal hunting incident on Rota

The Office of Representative Julie Ogo has been made aware of illegal hunting activities on Rota with the recent discovery of disposed deer carcasses at the East Dock, or Bantalan, last Sunday, March 10. This alarming incident has raised serious concerns on multiple fronts.

Firstly, the safety of swimmers is at risk due to the potential attraction of sharks to the blood from the carcasses, posing a significant threat of attack. Secondly, this discovery highlights ongoing illegal hunting activities occurring outside the designated hunting season, necessitating stricter enforcement measures to curb such violations. It also emphasizes the issue of overhunting, resulting in the wasteful disposal of unconsumed meat due to limited storage capacity. Third, contaminant leachate into our marine ecosystem is an additional threat to an already stressed environment from climate change.

As a lawmaker, Ogo is fully



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Disposed deer carcasses are seen floating at Rota East Dock, or Bantalan, last Sunday.

committed to addressing these pressing issues. The office is actively exploring amendments to local hunting laws, including potential extensions to the hunting season and the implementation of heightened penalties for illegal hunting practices.

Ogo reminds hunters of the serious nature of these violations and urges full compli-

ance with existing laws and regulations. The office remains dedicated to safeguarding the environment and promoting responsible hunting practices on Rota.

For further inquiries or information, contact the Rota Department of Land & Natural Resources Fish & Wildlife at (670) 532-1345. (PR)

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The Party of Reagan is dead. What has risen in its place is unrecognizable

Anyone hoping that Republican voters around the country would use Super Tuesday to slow their party's careening trajectory toward the Trumpian cliff now must face facts: It's over.

Donald Trump's near-total sweep of Super Tuesday states, and challenger Nikki Haley's subsequent campaign suspension Wednesday, means that, barring some epic surprise, American voters on Nov. 5 will be faced with a presidential rematch that most polls say most of them don't want.

Even among the many Republicans out there who recognize Trump's obvious unfitness for office, there will be a strong temptation to fall back on partisan muscle-memory and vote for him anyway.

To any of those who are still reachable, we'd ask a minute of your time to consider a counter-argument as the two-way race begins in earnest:

The Party of Reagan is dead. It has been replaced with something unrecognizable. It's built around not traditional Republican values, but the self-serving hubris of one autocracy-minded ex-president and a MAGA movement that is part populist, part cult of personality and entirely hostile toward any expression of democracy that doesn't bolster its own power.

Republicans and conservatives of good conscience who can't bring themselves to vote for President Joe Biden—fine—should at least consider any alternative that doesn't give a vote to this unstable, malicious man and his dangerous movement.

The threat here goes far beyond policy or partisanship. That should be evident to anyone who has paid attention to Trump's entire political career, but especially its arc since he tried to overthrow the 2020 election on Jan. 6, 2021.

He followed that irredeemable violation of his oath with suggestions that the Constitution should be suspended to return him to office, that his political enemies should be executed, that the American military should be used against American protesters, and that he should enjoy "complete and total immunity"—for life—for crimes committed while in office.

None of this is wild speculation from Trump's political enemies. These are all publicly expressed notions from Trump's own mouth, his social-media thumbs and his defense strategy in criminal court.

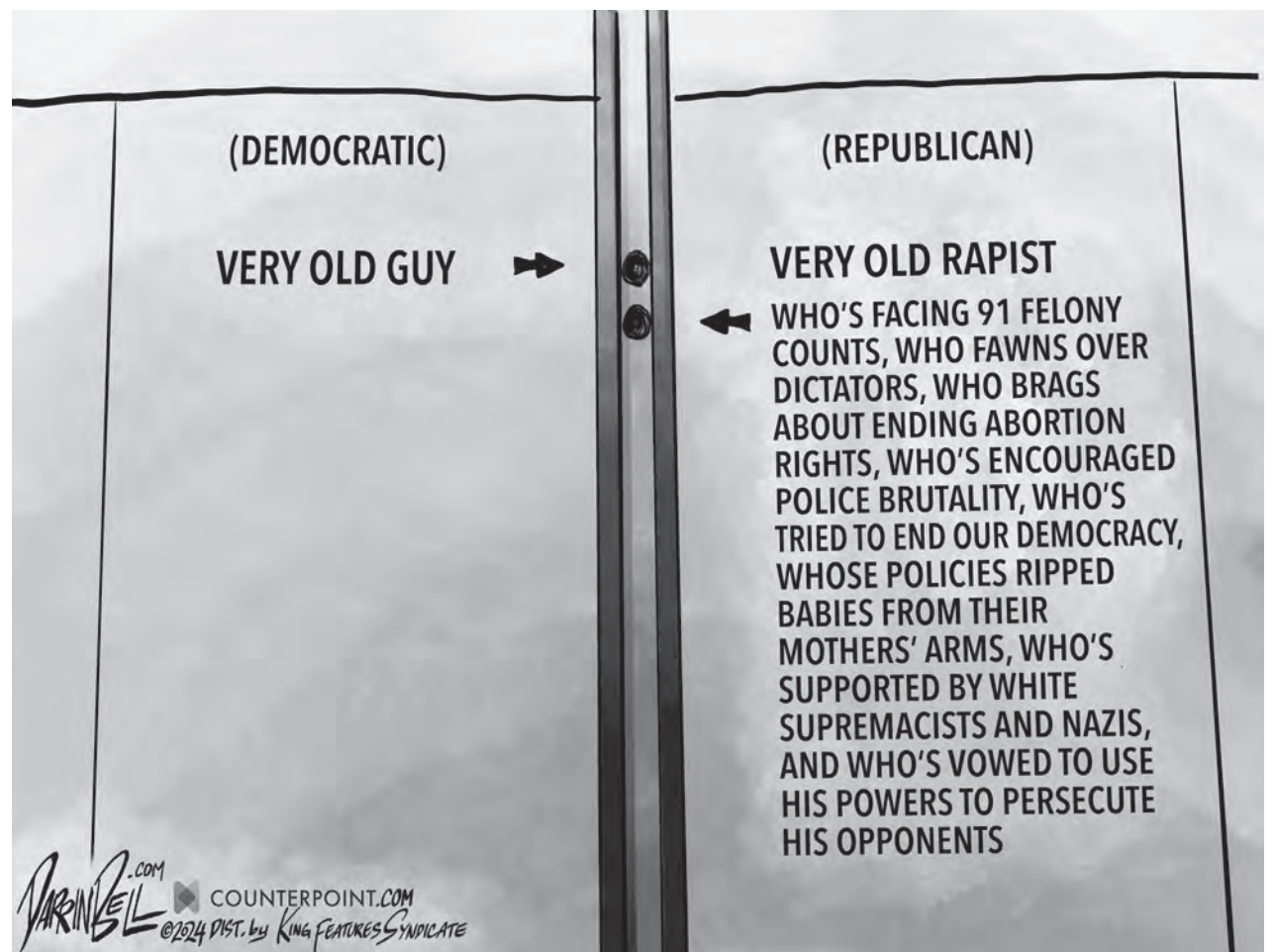
Any honest assessment of Trump's hold on the party must acknowledge that the policy issues that traditionally have unified Republicans are now an aside, at best. To the extent Trump has any policy priorities at all beyond his own abiding self-interest, they are incoherent.

He's tough on the border ... yet he personally sabotaged a bipartisan border agreement that gave Republicans virtually their every demand, because he wanted politically useful chaos instead.

He's tough on inflation ... yet he vows to slap global trading partners with tariffs that will drive up prices for American consumers.

He puts "America first" ... yet he's itching to abandon NATO, the most successful security alliance in history and one that has

See PARTY on Page 7



Women's History Month: An observance with significance

The historical significance of Women's History Month should not be understated. It was born out of the need to acknowledge the often-overlooked achievements of women that have been integral to the fabric of society.

This commemorative month, which began March 1, traces its roots to the mid-19th century, a time marked by the suffrage movement that fought tirelessly for women's right to vote—a fundamental milestone in the journey toward equality. Over the decades, women have broken barriers in every field, from science and politics to the arts and sports, laying the groundwork for future generations.

The contemporary relevance of Women's History Month lies in the ongoing challenges faced by women. Despite significant progress, disparities persist. Gender wage gaps, underrepresentation in leadership positions, violence against women, and limited access to health care are just a few of the issues that continue to impede gender equality. Moreover, the intersectionality of race, class and sexuality adds layers of complexity to these challenges, with women from marginalized communities often facing compounded discrimination.

Women's History Month is not just about reflecting on the past; it's about recognizing the continuous thread of women's contributions that enrich our present and shape our future. The pioneering efforts of scientists like Marie Curie, Katherine Johnson and Kizzmekia Corbett have expanded our understanding of the world and laid the foundation for future innovators to build upon. Their tenacity and brilliance lead aspiring young girls to be passionate about science.

The courageous activism of Sojourner Truth and Malala Yousafzai reminds us that the fight for justice is ongoing, and each voice can be powerful in championing change. Their courage underscores the importance of standing up for one's beliefs and the impact it can have on the world. These women, among countless others, have demonstrated that socio-political resistance can take many forms, and all are essential in the journey toward equity.

Similarly, the creative expressions of artists like Frida Kahlo and Maya Angelou offer us a window into the depths of the human experience, highlighting shared struggles and triumphs. Their art transcends time and inspires those who seek to understand and express life's complex emotions. Their legacy is a testament to the power of art in not only capturing the essence of an era but also influencing culture and thought.

The evolution of women's roles is evident as we witness more female leaders who bring fresh perspectives, challenge traditional norms and advocate for policies that benefit a broader spectrum of

By **F. WILLIS JOHNSON**
The Fulcrum

F. Willis Johnson is a United Methodist pastor, the author of *Holding Up Your Corner: Talking About Race in Your Community* (Abingdon Press, 2017) and program director for the Bridge Alliance, which houses *The Fulcrum*.



society. This surge of women in leadership positions is a beacon of progress, demonstrating that diversity in power is not only possible but beneficial for all. As they lead, focusing on social justice, health care, education and environmental sustainability, these women are shaping a legacy that encourages future generations to continue pushing achievable boundaries.

Each of us, I believe, has a part to play in securing the future of mothers, sisters, wives, daughters and friends through acts of solidarity. Such acts serve as bulwarks against the pervasive disparities that continue to undermine the rights of women globally. A critical pillar is education. By integrating accurate and comprehensive historical accounts into educational curricula, we can empower young girls with the knowledge of their foremothers' achievements, instilling the confidence and determination to discern their paths.

We must be vigilant in our efforts to safeguard women from violence by supporting legislation that addresses domestic abuse, sexual harassment and trafficking. Ensuring that women have complete control over their reproductive rights is a non-negotiable aspect of this movement, as it is intrinsic to their autonomy and well-being.

Likewise, fostering inclusive environments in every sphere of life is critical for advancing solidarity. Inclusive spaces and systems that challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes promote diversity and provide accessible paths for leadership, which are proven to work. By doing so, we enrich our communities and workplaces and model the principles of equity and respect for future generations.

This March is a call to acknowledge the past, affirm the present, and commit to a future where women's rights are recognized and unassailable. It is a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by women before us and acknowledge the responsibility we all share to continue their legacy. Join in embracing this Women's History Month with gratitude and determination, ensuring the preservation of the inalienable rights of girls and women everywhere.

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Gaza needs humanitarian aid now—with or without a cease-fire

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza is far too serious to remain unresolved as Israel and Hamas play chicken with negotiations over a temporary cease-fire. While Palestinian families eat leaves, grind animal feed to make bread, and babies die from malnutrition, Israel and Hamas are dawdling over finalizing a U.S.-backed plan for a humanitarian cease-fire that would permit a partial hostage release—and a surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza. A pause in hostilities is important, but the White House should intensify its push for a massive humanitarian aid influx—with or without a cease-fire.

Using humanitarian aid as a strategic weapon in Gaza—as both Hamas and Israel have been doing—cannot be tolerated any longer, with starvation and epidemics threatening to explode. Although the Israeli government denies it, facts on the ground make obvious that revenge is partly the motive for restricting aid into Gaza.

As the Israeli press has repeatedly reported, and endless videos from Gaza have confirmed, Israeli rules of military engagement regarding civilians have been so greatly relaxed as to ensure massive civilian casualties. Gazan health authorities claim that two-thirds of the reported 30,000 Palestinian deaths (including militants) are women and children. Endless photos of parents holding small bodies wrapped in white sheets barely hint at the pain.

While Israel has ordered Palestinian civilians to evacuate to the south, there has been no safety anywhere. Evacuation routes, tent camps, and supposedly safe areas are bombed, with extended families crammed into single apartments being killed because there might be one suspected Hamas fighter in the building.

Equally destructive, the flow of humanitarian aid trucks into Gaza has been drastically limited by a litany of Israeli excuses, as long lines of aid vehicles wait in Egypt or Israel to be permitted entry.

“On my way into Gaza, I passed hundreds of trucks, all unable to reach those in dire need,” said Jan Egeland, secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council. “Civilians in Gaza are falling sick from hunger and thirst because of Israel’s entry restrictions. Lifesaving supplies are being intentionally blocked.”

Indeed, although Israel blames Hamas fighters inside Gaza for stopping trucks, right-wing Israeli demonstrators have been permitted to block vehicles from entering at the Kerem Shalom crossing from Israel into Gaza, one of only two Israel has opened. The

number of trucks, already only a fraction of what is needed, has decreased in recent weeks. Moreover, Israel is making it impossible for aid to be delivered once it does enter Gaza.

Aid agencies are begging U.N. member states, including the U.S., to restore funding for UNRWA—the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East—which is the largest provider of aid and services inside Gaza. Israel claims some UNRWA employees participated in the Oct. 7 attack. Yet, there is no substitute organization with the personnel or infrastructure to deliver food, water, and shelter to the 1.4 million Gazans made homeless by Israeli bombs.

Israel has also targeted UNRWA workers and Gazan police (who worked for the former Hamas government) while providing security for aid trucks. The ensuing chaos led to the deaths of 110 Gazans last week from being trampled or shot by Israeli troops as they swarmed a food convoy in Gaza City.

Moreover, Israel has no clear plan for moving, let alone feeding, the 1.4 million hungry civilian refugees now clustered in the southern city of Rafah, which it is now bombing and says it intends to invade.

Keep in mind that, unlike refugees in larger wars, the Gazans are trapped in a tiny geography, unable to flee, except possibly into the Egyptian desert—something Cairo strongly opposes because Egyptian officials know Israel would never permit those Palestinians to return home.

So, what is to be done to prevent famine? In an astonishing sign of President Joe Biden’s frustration with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the United States has started airdropping MREs (military meals ready to eat) onto Gaza’s southwestern beaches. But such drops are risky and only address a tiny pittance of the need.

According to Vice President Kamala Harris, the U.S. “will work on a new route by sea to deliver aid.” But Gaza has minimal port facilities, so little seaborne aid is likely to arrive.

There are other steps Israel could take immediately to increase the flow of aid. The most urgent, as Harris proposed: “They must open new border crossings”—including two inside Israel, Erez and Karni—“They must not impose any unnecessary restrictions on the delivery of aid. They must ensure humanitarian personnel, sites, and convoys are not targeted.”

By **TRUDY RUBIN**
The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Equally important: If there is no broader Israel-Hamas deal in the coming days, the United States should press for a new U.N. Security Council resolution focusing mainly on getting food, fuel, water, medicine, and shelter into Gaza, even before any cease-fire.

Such U.S. pressure would be doing Israel a favor, since scenes of massive starvation already play into Hamas’ hands—and will forever blot Israel’s global reputation.

In the immediate future, if there is no succor for Gaza civilians before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (which will begin around March 10), Israeli-Palestinian tensions in Jerusalem could explode, provoking more international support for Hamas.

So, let’s hope for a six-week cease-fire. But the most urgent need is to force Israel (and Hamas) to let in massive aid convoys before Ramadan starts.

PARTY

From page 6

effectively leveraged American might around the world. The list of other long-held Republican principles and goals sacrificed on the MAGA altar is too long to thoroughly explore here. A sample includes fiscal responsibility (Trump’s administration added an unprecedented \$8.4 trillion to the federal debt), defense of global democracy (Trump has led the GOP’s shameful movement toward abandoning Ukraine to Russia), law and order (91 indictments) and “family values” (why even discuss it?).

What the GOP has lost in substantive policy cred under Trump, it has also lost in tolerance, civility and (dare we say it?) class.

Trump’s own brand of narcissistic, childish, often self-defeating combativeness—as when he declared, before Super Tuesday, that Nikki “Birdbrain” Haley’s supporters will be excommunicated from the GOP—has come to personify the gatherings of his most enthusiastic followers.

Post-Dispatch Editorial Board member Lynn Schmidt, a life-long active Republican, experienced this first hand recently, when she participated in a Missouri GOP county caucus. In a column that will run this weekend, she describes how she and other Haley supporters were openly intimidated—made to stand apart from the crowd, booed and jeered as “communists”—for failing to toe the Trump line.

European history of the not-too-distant past has some antecedents to this fervent phenomenon. None of them turned out well.

Among the insults lobbed at Schmidt and other Haley supporters was “RINO”—Republican in Name Only. We would argue that acronym actually should apply to Trump and his followers, based on their enthusiastic betrayal of the GOP’s traditional principles.

The irony of their single-minded dedication to Trump is that polls show Haley would, in a general election, trounce Biden. The coming Trump-Biden rematch, in contrast, is likely to be a squeaker.

But if Republicans shot themselves in the foot on Tuesday, Democrats have joined them.

Just about any nationally known Democratic officeholder would probably fare better against Trump in November than Biden will, largely due to concerns about Biden’s age. Yet Democrats are careening toward their own cliff by quietly accepting Biden’s selfish and irresponsible determination to seek re-election. The ghost of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg looms.

Say this for Biden, though: He’s not an indicted alleged criminal, a civilly liable rapist, a divisive demagogue or an anti-constitutional aspiring autocrat. Trump is all of these things. He belongs nowhere near power.

For those who understand this, but who, for whatever reason, can’t bring themselves to vote for Biden, we get it.

We suggest a write-in vote that would make an important point for serious Republicans: “Ronald Wilson Reagan.”

SENESCENT SONNETS

Gluttonous Gabs on Food and Flabs

LITERARY NOOK
By **JOEY CONNOLLY**
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



During Lent many Christians give something up to show respect for Christ fasting in the desert for 40 days before beginning his public service. As a boy growing up in a Catholic household my mother used to tell us five children to give up candy and/or sweets and pastries during Lent. That was kind of easy for us kids since we didn’t have much money to spend on candy, with a nickel to a quarter a week allowance.

Given the large number of diabetics, overweight, and morbidly obese citizens here in the CNMI (myself included), my thoughts turned to all the Easter candy about to flood store shelves. Jelly beans, chocolate bunnies, chocolate and marshmallow eggs, yellow, pink, and blue marshmallow Peeps will lead the Easter parade. You want to lose weight? Just don’t *balutan* your plate.

I Got No Abs But Plenty Flabs

Here is one of my overdue overweight blabs
Bowls of melted butter for lobster and crabs
Gaining fat everywhere slowly in dribs and drabs
I noticed I developed a big 12-pack of flabs
The big gut around my waist causes gabs
No money for health spa treatment or rehabs

Don’t like losing weight by a few needle jabs
Or liver damaging drugs from weight loss labs
Cake and ice cream dreaming of Queen Mab
Endless food chart counting for calorie nabs
Eating gravy covered French fries with fork stabs
On a weight scale every single day keeping tabs
I like zaftig women somewhat Rubenesque
This flab on my body I find quite grotesque.

(Note: “Zaftig” is a Yiddish word for pleasantly plump, and “Rubenesque” refers to women painted by Peter Paul Rubens, who is regarded as one of the greatest painters of the 17th century Baroque period. Women he painted in his religious and mythological subjects had voluptuous bodies.

The following poem is inspired by Li Po, aka Li Bai, Chinese, Tang Dynasty, (701-762) *On a Banquet with My Cousins on a Spring Night in the Peach Garden.*

Buffet by Myself One Day in Vegas

Now the buffet lines have diminished
My choice of hundreds of dishes
Love gelato, sherbet, and ice cream
I begin my gluttonous buffet spin
Been around the salad bar twice
Now two aisles of pastry bars not far
Let’s see carrot cake, cream cheese cake
Fudge brownie cake with soft chocolate
And vanilla ice cream. Gotta get some
Of that green pistachio ice cream too and
Two small pieces of pie, strawberry and blue.
Readers if you think I’m exaggerating about
Eating all these desserts at one setting I’m
Not! Some other sweets names I just forgot.

Saipan to host PATA Micronesia Chapter meeting on March 13-15

The Pacific-Asia Travel Association Micronesia Chapter will hold its tri-annual general membership meeting on March 13-15, 2024, on Saipan, the Marianas.

PATA is a membership association acting as a catalyst for the responsible development of the Asia Pacific travel and tourism industry. The PATA Micronesia Chapter consists of members from the Micronesia region working directly in the tourism industry and other related sectors.

The tri-annual meeting is being organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority.

"The mission of PATA Micronesia is to assist in the development of regional tourism



JUNKI TAKASAGO

Managaha Marine Conservation Area on Saipan, the Marianas is the most popular tourist spot in the archipelago. The Micronesia chapter of the Pacific-Asia Travel Association will hold its tri-annual general membership meeting on Saipan on March 13-15, 2024.

industry with strategies that adhere to high operational standards and provide opportunity for education, train-

ing and gainful employment among the resident populations of our Micronesian membership. said MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "The MVA is pleased to work alongside other dedicated chapter members to amplify the voice and exposure of our slice of paradise on earth, the islands of Micronesia."

Delegates are expected to begin arriving on March 13. The PATA Micronesia Chapter board and executive committee will meet in the morning. All members will have a tour in the afternoon of historical and scenic sites around Saipan.

On March 14, the PATA Mi-

cronesia Chapter general membership meeting will be held at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan all day, and delegates will have the opportunity to visit the Project Regalu/Liffang Cultural Experience after the meeting.

On March 15, the delegation will have a canoe sailing tour with 500 Sails, a non-profit organization committed to restoring the indigenous maritime traditions of the Marianas.

In previous years, the MVA has collaborated with other PATA Micronesia chapter members on joint promotions at trade shows such as ITB Asia, PATA Travel Mart.

ADEX Singapore, and Quality of Life Expo.

Managing director Kadoi Ruloked of Palau Visitors Authority is chapter chairman. PATA Micronesia Chapter membership is open to any organization, business or individual with an interest to develop, market or sell travel to, from and within Micronesia. Its committees include Marketing, Education, Public Relations, Membership, and Culture, Heritage and Environment. To become a member, visit: <https://patamicronesia.org/membership>.

PATA Micronesia last met in the Marianas in 2019. (PR)

DC WORKING TRIP



PSS

The CNMI Public School System has joined their counterparts and fellow presenters selected from various school districts in the nation at the ongoing Comprehensive Center Network Meeting the Moment Summit: How State Leaders are Using Innovation for Impact in Washington, D.C. Joining the CNMI PSS team in presenting its successes are Commissioner of Education Dr. Lawrence Camacho, Special Education State director Donna M. Flores, Federal Programs officer Jacqueline Che, senior director for Accountability, Research and Evaluation Dr. Rizalina Liwag, and State Program Officer-director of Grants Management & Compliance Peter Arriola, and from the Pacific Resource for Education and Learning, co-director and Senior Research Specialist Lynette C. Villagomez.



PSS

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Angel Cardona, left, joins Public School System Commissioner of Education Dr. Lawrence F. Camacho at the Comprehensive Center Network Meeting the Moment Summit: How State Leaders are Using Innovation for Impact in Washington, D.C.

Radewagen responds to Biden's State of the Union speech

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Delegate Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS) arrived in American Samoa on the Thursday flight, and followed the content of President Biden's State of the Union address, instead of attending this year.

As a member of Congress, she has attended these speeches under three presidents.

"Last year at this time, we were just getting started on our committee work regarding the Pacific region and China's influence, including the Indo-Pacific Task Force that I chaired," said Radewagen. "This topic was still my main interest in the speech Thursday evening, along with any areas of consensus that could lead to positives for American Samoa.

Right now, the immediate priority in Congress is completing the second appropriations package to fund the State Department, Defense, and HHS. We have momentum on that, having just finished the package funding Interior, Veterans, Energy and Transportation."

"As expected, the speech included U.S. concerns about China's influence and activities. In terms of U.S. regional commitment, I will continue to convey that American Samoa has a logical role to play in placement of Coast Guard cutters and in the area of regional health care," she continued. "On foreign policy, I support the U.S. diplomatic view that the remaining Hamas hostages must be released as the best

next step for Israel and the people of Gaza."

"My main point of concern for our islands during the Biden Administration continues to be how their restrictive policies affect the future of our fishing rights, which are vital to our economy, and important to the U.S., since food security is national security," she emphasized. "I was pleased the President mentioned 'Buy American' policies but they need to be firmly applied to U.S. purchases of American-produced tuna."

She concluded, "Government remains divided and often contentious in our nation's capital, and I will continue to work in a bipartisan manner for American Samoa." (PR)

Sanitary inspections of food establishments for February 2024

During the month of February, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Environmental Health Disease Prevention conducted sanitary inspections on retail, eating, and drinking establishments. Through this release, EHDP is providing names of establishments by inspection grade and names of establishments which were ordered to close for serious violations of health and sanitation standards. For these establishments, we provide the suspension date and the date they were certified to resume operations.

Classifications for Food Safety Rating for an establishment receiving a score of:

- 90-100 Grade A
- 80-89 Grade B
- 70-79 Grade C
- <69 closure/suspension

RESULTS

Grade A:

Saipan

- American Pizza & Grill, Garapan
- Vi-Lyn's BBQ Stand, Garapan
- Buenas Café, Afetna
- Tang Ji Restaurant, Gualo Rai
- KS Market, Garapan
- Pacific Palm Restaurant, Chalan Kiya
- Tambayan Resto, Chalan Kanoa
- Angel Market, Kagman
- I Love Saipan 108 Shop, Chalan Laulau
- San Roque Market, San Roque
- New L&Q Market, Garapan
- Saipan Create Beauty Japanese Lifestyle Shop (Refreshment), Garapan
- Saipan Create Beauty Japanese Lifestyle Shop II (Refreshment), Gualo Rai
- Guangzhou Restaurant, Garapan
- Bistro Marianas, Garapan

- Tokyo Mart Saipan, Garapan
- Win Ent. Wholesale, Gualo Rai
- Napu Brewing, Garapan
- Marianas Meat Harvesting Slaughter House, Lower Base
- Julie's Barbeque, Garapan
- Alpex Saipan Wholesale, San Antonio
- The Original Lucky Bill American & Thai Restaurant, Garapan
- Abygnale's Snack Bar, Chalan Kanoa
- Tapped Out, Garapan
- Islander Mini Mart, San Antonio
- Nam Dae Moon Restaurant, Garapan
- Shirley's Coffee Shop, Susupe
- Shirley's Coffee Shop, Garapan
- Cool Market, Fina Sisu
- Ador Restaurant, San Antonio
- Morae Kitchen & Bar, Garapan
- Dionysos Pocha Restaurant, Garapan
- Pacific Star Wholesale, Gualo Rai
- H-Mart Wholesale, San Antonio
- Korean Restaurant Bab, Garapan
- Twins Supermarket II, Puerto Rico
- Twins Supermarket, Dandan

- ❖ Retail
- ❖ Butcher and packing facility
- Lucky De Market, Dandan
- ❖ Retail
- ❖ butcher and packing facility
- Micronesia Brokers, Lower Navy Hill
- ❖ Retail
- ❖ Wholesale
- AB Wild Bill's, Garapan
- ❖ Bar
- ❖ Restaurant
- Ming Yang Supermarket, San Vicente
- ❖ Retail

- ❖ butcher and packing facility
- ❖ Wholesale
- Han Nam Supermarket, Koblerville
- ❖ Retail
- ❖ Catering

Tinian

- Bar-K Restaurant
- Kalaya'an Catering

Rota

- Sarah Jane's Ice Plant
- Lucky Store
- Pizzaria Bar & Grill
- Katie's Catering
- Sunshine Variety Shop

Grade B:

- Korean Restaurant Bab, San Jose
- JD Store II, Chalan Kiya
- CK Smoke House & Salad, Chalan Kanoa

Tinian

- JC Café Restaurant
- Lucky Qiang Mart

Rota:

- PJM Ent.
- ❖ Bakery
- ❖ Catering

CLOSED

EHDP said two establishments were ordered closed for serious violations of health and sanitation standards.

■ Crystal Water Manufacture, Afetna was closed on Feb. 22, 2024 and reopened Feb. 22, 2024

■ New Matty's, As Lito was closed on Feb. 21, 2024 and reopened on March 1, 2024.

For more information, contact the EHDP office at (670) 236-2022/27/28, or email EHDP administrator John Tagabuel at john.tagabuel@chcc.health.com.

For more information about CHCC programs, follow them on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.health or call us at (670) 234-8951. (PR)

Pacific Islands Caucus co-chairs hail passage of COFA legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The co-chairs of the bipartisan House Pacific Islands Caucus are hailing House passage of legislation that renews and funds the Compacts of Free Association. The Compacts are the foundation for U.S. relations with the Republic of the Marshall



Kim

Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau for the next generation.

“As a representative from among the Pacific Island peoples, it was an honor to support and take part in this historic legislation to emphasize these deep friendships,” said Delegate Aumua



Radewagen

Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS), who chaired the Natural Resources Committee’s bipartisan Indo-Pacific Task Force. “The COFA agreements send a clear message of U.S. commitment to the Pacific region, and take a much-needed international strong stand for the ideals of democracy and freedom.”

“The Compacts are central not only to our longstanding relationships with Palau, the Marshall Is-

lands and the Federated States of Micronesia, but to our country’s standing in the broader Pacific,” said Rep. Ed Case (D-HI).

“Standing by our Indo-Pacific allies is imperative to bolster U.S. leadership and counter growing aggression by the Chinese Communist Party. The Compacts of Free Association agreements between the U.S., Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands are essential to projecting strength in the region,” said Rep. Young Kim (R-CA), who serves as chairwoman of the Indo-Pacific Subcommittee. “I’m thrilled these COFA agreements will be renewed to provide economic assistance, support those who serve in our nation’s uniform, and allow the U.S. to protect our sea lines of communication in the Pacific.”

“The Compacts of Free Association renewal reaffirms the United States’ strong and longstanding friendships with the Freely Associated States—the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands,” said Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA). “I am pleased to see elements of my bipartisan Care for COFA Veterans Act included in this legislation to expand VA health benefits to veterans from the FAS who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. The passage of the COFA renewal honors our commitment to our historical FAS partners and those who served in our nation’s military.”

“Our bilateral agreements with the Freely Associated States form the backbone of U.S. foreign policy in the Pacific Islands, a strategically

critical region that is increasingly under threat from the Chinese Communist Party,” said Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO). “I applaud the extension of the Compacts of Free Association, which establish national security arrangements, including military bases, in the Western Pacific that help us protect our allies and counter the growing influence of adversaries like China. The inclusion of COFA in this appropriations package extends and deepens our vital relationships in the Pacific Islands and reaffirms our commitment to supporting partner nations in what remains a strategically important region.”

“The Freely Associated States have been historical partners of the U.S., including many FAS citizens who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces,” said Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA). “The Compacts of Free Association renewal is an important reaffirmation of the unbreakable bonds between the U.S. and the FAS—particularly at a time of increased aggression in the region by the People’s Republic of China. I applaud the renewal of the COFA and look forward to increasing cooperation and strengthening ties between the U.S. and our historic partners in the FAS.”

The legislation continues to affirm the COFA states’ sovereignty and deep friendship with the U.S., and ensure U.S. defense of an area of the Pacific waters the size of the contiguous 48 U.S. states. The COFA funding is within a package of 2024 appropriations bills, passed by the House on Wednesday with a vote of 339-85. (PR)

UOG workshops for caregivers of persons with dementia: Activities of Daily Living

The University of Guam’s Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program is offering an opportunity for caregivers of persons with dementia to participate in an online training and certification program called CARES Activities of Daily Living. This award-winning program will teach caregivers how to help persons with dementia with the fundamental activities of daily living across all stages of dementia.

The training program includes 10 modules: (1) Dementia and the CARES Approach; (2) Creating Meaning in Activities of Daily Living; (3) Recognizing and Managing Pain; (4) Bathing; (5) Dressing; (6) Eating; (7) Grooming; (8) Mouth Care; (9) Using the Bathroom; and (10) Mobility, Transferring, and Positioning. Participants who complete all 10 modules will receive a certificate of completion and will be eligible for CARES Dementia Certification.

Upcoming modules in March:

Module 1: Dementia and the CARES® Approach

■ 6pm-8pm, Wednesday, March 6
Module 2: Creating Meaning in Activities of Daily Living

■ 10am-12pm, Saturday, March 9
Module 3: Recognizing and Managing Pain

■ 6pm-8pm, Wednesday, March 13
Module 4: Bathing

■ 10am-12pm, Saturday, March 16
Module 5: Dressing

■ 6pm-8pm, Wednesday, March 20
Module 6: Eating

■ 10am-12pm, Saturday, March 23
Module 7: Grooming

■ 6pm-8pm, Wednesday, March 27
Module 8: Mouth Care

■ 10am-12pm, Saturday, March 30

Participants can attend the Wednesday or Saturday sessions using the following Zoom links:

■ Wednesday sessions: <https://zoom.us/j/92072878067>

■ Saturday sessions: <https://zoom.us/j/91243370958>

Ongoing dementia support groups

These sessions are part of the ongoing

online support groups for family caregivers of persons with dementia being conducted by the Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program of the UOG School of Health. The support group sessions are held on Zoom on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings year-round. The sessions are free of charge to partners, family members, and other caregivers of persons with dementia who have ties to Guam and the Micronesian region.

For more information, contact:

■ Dr. Iain Twaddle or Nikolas Gutierrez

Guam/Micronesia Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program
Telehealth Geriatric Support Services

University of Guam

Tel: (671) 735-2883

Email: gwp.tgss@triton.uog.edu

■ Rhoda Orallo

Health Services of the Pacific

Tel: (671) 735-3277

Email: r.orallo@hspguam.com (PR)



MOBIL DONATION

As part of their longstanding support of higher education in the CNMI, Mobil Oil Marianas recently donated \$2,000 cash and \$1,000 worth of prepaid gas cards to the Northern Marianas College Foundation. In the photo from left, Mobil Oil Marianas representatives Joseph Jones and Ed Flores, NMC employee Casey Huliganga, and Mobil Oil Marianas representatives Tanya Fogata, Malaina Kileleman, and Jimmy Pascual. Interested individuals and companies who would like to donate to the college can contact the NMC Foundation at nmc@marianas.edu or call (670) 237-6780.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

USDA, local partners to conduct Census of Agriculture in CNMI

The USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, with the support of the CNMI’s Department of Commerce-Central Statistics Division, will begin visits to farms on Saipan, Rota and Tinian to conduct the 2023 Census of Agriculture data collection from all known farmers starting mid-March 2024.

For this effort, a farm is defined as all places from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, in 2023.

The most widely used statistics in the agriculture industry, the Census of Agriculture, typically conducted every five years, provides the most comprehensive and impartial agriculture data at the island level.

Federal and local governments, agribusinesses, organizations, and many more use agriculture census data to support funding research and programs to improve farming techniques and equipment, building infrastructure for high-speed internet, providing effective production and distribution systems as well as natural disaster preparation, response, and recovery assistance. One of the most important uses of ag census data is to justify claims of farmers who may suffer damages and losses due to natural disasters, such as typhoons.

“The Census of Agriculture is a

powerful voice for the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands agriculture. The information gathered influences policy decisions that will have a tremendous impact on producers and their communities for years to come,” said NASS administrator Hubert Hamer. “I strongly encourage all farmers to prepare their farm records. We need to hear from all of our farmers to provide the most accurate and helpful information about agriculture in the islands.”

The 2023 questionnaire includes an expanded list of commodities and new questions on agricultural practices to better capture changes and trends in the industry.

Responding in the agriculture census is required by federal law under Title 7 USC 2204(g) Public Law 105-113.

The same law requires USDA to keep all information confidential, to use the data only for statistical purposes, and to publish the data in aggregate form to prevent disclosing the identity of any individual producer or farm operation.

USDA will release the U.S. territory agriculture census data on their website in the summer of 2025. For more information about the Census of Agriculture, visit nass.usda.gov/AgCensus.

For more information, please contact the Central Statistics Division at telephone number (670) 664-3023.

Business

Legislature, Saipan Chamber form working group

In an effort to address the ongoing challenges facing the CNMI, the 23rd Northern Marianas Legislature and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce have come together to establish a collaborative working group.

This initiative marks a significant step forward in fostering a unified approach to tackling issues confronting both the business community and the community at large. From the Legislature, the group consists of Sen. Corina Magofna (Ind-Saipan), House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), floor leader Rep. Edwin Propst (D-Saipan), Rep. Vicente Aldan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. Julie Ogo (Ind-Rota). Saipan Chamber leaders in this group include president Joe C. Guerrero, director Alex Sablan, vice president Joshua Wise, and executive director Kimberly Camacho.

The formation of the working group was born by a shared recognition of the need for a cohesive effort to navigate the complexities of the current economic and social landscape. The initial meeting, held at the Chamber's office on Feb. 23, 2024, set the groundwork for what promises to be a productive partnership. At that meeting, the legislative group invited the Chamber representatives, Guerrero and Sablan, to join a meeting on March 1, 2024, with Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero and Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio to discuss regional issues. A subsequent meeting took place at the House speaker's office on Feb. 27, 2024 to prepare for the Guam meeting, further solidifying the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI Legislature and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce working group during a recent meeting.

group's commitment to collaborative problem-solving.

The purpose of meeting with Guam leaders was to discuss priority regional issues affecting the Marianas region, including air transportation, access to foreign labor and workforce development, immigration, healthcare, and setting up a formal structure to address these current shared priorities as well as future ones.

The working group aims to bring a comprehensive perspective to the many issues affecting our lives, drawing on the expertise and experience of the group's members from both the legislative branch



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The working group is made up of Sen. Corina Magofna (Ind-Saipan), House Speaker Edmund Villagomez (Ind-Saipan), floor leader Rep. Edwin Propst (D-Saipan), Rep. Vicente Aldan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. John Paul Sablan (Ind-Saipan), and Rep. Julie Ogo (Ind-Rota), as well as Chamber of Commerce president Joe C. Guerrero, director Alex Sablan, vice president Joshua Wise, and executive director Kimberly Camacho.

and business sector. The working group plans to meet frequently, not less than monthly, to hold parties accountable for moving things forward. Stay tuned for updates on the group's progress and initiatives as they work tirelessly to better our community. **(PR)**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

SCC sets Q1 professional dev't training



Ortiz

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the upcoming 2024 1st Quarter Professional Development Training, centered around "Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace."

Facilitated by Jerome C. Ortiz, interim IT director of Northern Marianas College, this comprehensive training is set to take place on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at the TPOD 1, NMC Campus.

The training will have two sessions for flexibility, with the first session scheduled from 9am to 11am and the second session from 1pm to 3pm.

This professional development training is designed to equip participants with a comprehensive understanding of Artificial Intelligence and its applications in the professional arena. The training topics are:

Understanding AI basics:

- Introduction to essential concepts and skills for setting up and utilizing AI platforms.
- Exploration of technologies like ChatGPT and other AI tools.

AI in the workplace:

- Hands-on experience in deploying AI for problem-solving and content generation.
- Practical insights into integrating AI solutions into the daily operations of businesses.

Introduction to AI:

- A solid introduction to navigating the AI landscape.
- Guidance on effectively integrating AI tools into day-to-day business operations.

Participants are asked to bring their own computer or mobile device to enhance the training experience.

To secure your spot at this professional development opportunity, interested individuals can RSVP by visiting <https://business.saipanchamber.com/events/details/2024-1st-quarter-professional-development-training-artificial-intelligence-461?calendarMonth=2024-03-01>. Alternatively, you may contact the SCC office at (670) 234-7150 or via email at contactus@saipanchamber.org.

The Chamber is committed to providing opportunities for professional growth and development, and the "Artificial Intelligence in the Workplace" training promises to be an insightful and practical session for individuals and businesses alike.

The Chamber is a non-profit organization in the CNMI with a membership of 140 members and growing. It is committed to empowering the islands' enterprise as a resource, advocate, and connector for Saipan's private sector; our vision is to create an Island where businesses, family, and the community succeed as one. **(PR)**

Biden signs package of spending bills passed by Congress

» Just hours before a shutdown deadline

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden on Saturday signed a \$460 billion package of spending bills approved by the Senate in time to avoid a shutdown of many key federal agencies. The legislation's success gets lawmakers about half-way home in wrapping up their appropriations work for the 2024 budget year.

The measure contains six annual spending bills and had already passed the House. In signing it into law, Biden thanked leaders and negotiators from both parties in both chambers for their work, which the White House said will mean that agencies "may continue their normal operations."

Meanwhile, lawmakers are negotiating a second package of six bills, including defense, in an effort to have all federal agencies fully funded by a March 22 deadline.

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Life & Style

'Oppenheimer' crowned best picture at the Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Oppenheimer," a solemn three-hour biopic that became an unlikely billion-dollar box-office sensation, was crowned best picture at a 96th Academy Awards that doubled as a coronation for Christopher Nolan.

After passing over arguably Hollywood's foremost big-screen auteur for years, the Oscars made up for lost time by heaping seven awards on Nolan's blockbuster biopic, including best actor for Cillian Murphy, best supporting actor for Robert Downey Jr. and best director for Nolan.

In anointing "Oppenheimer," the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences did something it hasn't done for more than a decade: hand its top prize to a widely seen, big-budget studio film. In a film industry where a cape, dinosaur or Tom Cruise has often been a requirement for such box office, "Oppenheimer" brought droves of moviegoers to theaters with a complex, fission-filled drama about J. Robert Oppenheimer and the creation of the atomic bomb.

"For better or worse, we're all living in Oppenheimer's world," said Murphy in his acceptance speech. "I'd like to dedicate this to the peacemakers."

As a film heavy with unease for human capacity for mass destruction, "Oppenheimer" also emerged—even over its partner in cultural phenomenon, "Barbie"—as a fittingly foreboding film for times rife with cataclysm, man-made or not.

Sunday's Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles unfolded against the backdrop of wars in Gaza and Ukraine, and with a potentially momentous U.S. election on the horizon. Awards



Emma Thomas, left, and Christopher Nolan accept the award for best picture for "Oppenheimer" during the Oscars on Sunday, March 10, 2024, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

for the documentary winner, "20 Days in Mariupol," and best international film, "The Zone of Interest," brought geopolitics into the Oscar spotlight.

The most closely watched contest went to Emma Stone, who won best actress for her performance as Bella Baxter in "Poor Things." In what was seen as the night's most nail-biting category, Stone won over Lily Gladstone of "Killers of the Flower Moon." Gladstone would have become the first Native American to win an Academy Award.

Instead, Oscar voters couldn't resist the full-bodied extremes of Stone's "Poor Things" performance. The win for Stone, her second best actress Oscar following her 2017 win for "La La

Land," confirmed the 35-year-old as arguably the preeminent big-screen actress of her generation. The list of women to win best actress two or more times is illustrious, including Katharine Hepburn, Frances McDormand, Ingrid Bergman and Bette Davis.

"Oh, boy, this is really overwhelming," said Stone, who fought back tears and a broken dress during her speech.

Sunday's broadcast had razzle dazzle, including a sprawling song-and-dance rendition of the "Barbie" hit "I'm Just Ken" by Ryan Gosling, with an assist on guitar by Slash and a sea of Kens who swarmed the stage.

But protest and politics intruded on an election-year Academy Awards. Late during

the show, host Jimmy Kimmel read a critical social media post from former president Donald Trump.

"Thank you for watching," said Kimmel. "Isn't it past your jail time?"

Nolan has had many movies in the Oscar mix before, including "Inception," "Dunkirk" and "The Dark Knight." But his win Sunday for direction is the first Academy Award for the 53-year-old filmmaker. Addressing the crowd, Nolan noted cinema is just over a hundred years old.

"Imagine being there 100 years into painting or theater," said Nolan, who shared the best-picture award with Emma Thomas, his wife and producer. "We don't know where this in-

credible journey is going from here. But to know that you think that I'm a meaningful part of it means the world to me."

Downey, nominated twice before (for "Chaplin" and "Tropic Thunder"), also notched his first Oscar, crowning the illustrious second act of his up-and-down career.

"I'd like to thank my terrible childhood and the academy, in that order," said Downey, the son of filmmaker Robert Downey Sr.

"Barbie," last year's biggest box-office hit with more than \$1.4 billion in ticket sales, ultimately won just one award: best song (sorry, Ken) for Billie Eilish and Finneas' "What Was I Made For?" It's their second Oscar, two years after winning for

their James Bond theme, "No Time to Die."

Protests over Israel's war in Gaza snarled traffic around the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, slowing stars' arrival on the red carpet and turning the Oscar attention toward the ongoing conflict. Some protesters shouted "Shame!" at those trying to reach the awards.

Jonathan Glazer, the British filmmaker whose chilling Auschwitz drama "The Zone of Interest" won best international film, drew connections between the dehumanization depicted in his film and today.

"Right now, we stand here as men who refute their Jewishness and the Holocaust being hijacked by an occupation which has led to conflict for so many innocent people, whether the victims of October the 7th in Israel, or the ongoing attack on Gaza, all the victims, this dehumanization, how do we resist?"

A year after "Navalny" won the same award, Mstyslav Chernov's "20 Days in Mariupol," a harrowing chronicle of the early days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, won best documentary. The win, a first for The Associated Press and PBS' "Frontline," came as the war in Ukraine passed the two-year mark with no signs of abating.

Chernov, the Ukrainian filmmaker and AP journalist whose hometown was bombed the day he learned of his Oscar nomination, spoke forcefully about Russia's invasion.

"This is the first Oscar in Ukrainian history, and I'm honored," said Chernov. "Probably I will be the first director on this stage to say I wish I'd never made this film. I wish to be able to exchange this (for) Russia never attacking Ukraine."

Father's threat leads to change in family dynamics

DEAR ABBY: While I was visiting my father-in-law, a heated conversation turned violent. My husband, "Rob," was helping his dad and a neighbor with a house project. When Rob's dad became upset at him, he lifted the power saw he was holding, turned it on and motioned toward Rob saying, "You're lucky I don't slit your throat." He said some other unkind things and we left. He has not reached out to my husband since, and Rob has deleted his phone number.

His dad sent me a text taking no responsibility for his actions and blaming Rob, which is why we have decided to cut ties for now. We have a teen daughter, and my father-in-law has also texted her. We do not want her around him, and Rob wants to instruct her not to respond. The day his father acted like this was also the one-year anniversary of the passing of his long-term girlfriend (who was more like a wife). Should we tell our daughter not to respond to his messages?

THREATENED IN OREGON

DEAR THREATENED: Your daughter is old enough to know what is going on and to be able to respond to her grandfather's texts. (I'm not sure how you could stop her.) However, she should ALSO be made aware that, in a moment of anger, her grandfather threatened to KILL her father, which is why you have decided it is safer to keep your distance. At

the least, "dear old Dad" owes his son an apology.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Is it acceptable to put someone on speakerphone without informing them? I recently had a conversation with my younger sister about our mother's health issues. In the background, I heard someone make a comment to her about something I had said about our parents. When I asked, "Who is that?", she said it was her live-in boyfriend (of two years) and that I had been on speakerphone the entire time. I immediately ended the conversation.

Please understand that no one in our family has met or spoken to this man other than my sister. To me, he's a stranger. I felt it was inappropriate for him to listen in on our conversation whether it was a personal family issue or not. I'm not sure if "violated" is the right description for how I felt after hanging up, but it didn't sit well with me even though nothing derogatory had been said.

Am I behind the times, or did my sister make an error in judgment? I have not discussed my displeasure with her, but I plan to. My wife agrees with me but says I should drop it and be mindful of my sister's actions going forward.

OVERHEARD IN FLORIDA

DEAR OVERHEARD: The rule of etiquette is that the

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



person you call should ask before putting someone on speaker if someone else is present. That said, Sissy and her boyfriend have been living together for two years. I doubt she keeps secrets from him. What she hears she shares with him. The next time you want to discuss some "family business" with her, open the conversation by telling her you would like her to please not put you on speaker. Then cross your fingers and hope she complies.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

76ers hold Knicks to lowest point total in NBA this season in 79-73 win



NEW YORK (AP)—Kelly Oubre Jr. had 18 points and 10 rebounds and the Philadelphia 76ers held the New York Knicks to the lowest point total in the NBA this season, winning 79-73 on Sunday night in the ugly opener of a two-game series.

Less than two months after Joel Embiid scored 70 points by himself to set a 76ers franchise record, it appeared for a while that neither team might get that many Sunday.

Philadelphia led 37-31 at halftime, the lowest-scoring first half in an NBA game since Portland led Detroit 34-31 on March 30, 2019, in a game the Pistons won 99-90. The scoring picked up in the second half, when the 76ers finally got enough contributions to snap a three-game losing streak. Buddy Hield had 16 points and Paul Reed added 13.

Jalen Brunson scored 19 points for the Knicks, but shot just 6 for 22. New York shot 32.5% overall and 22.5% from 3-point range. The Knicks committed 21 turnovers that led to 17 Philadelphia points.

THUNDER 124, GRIZZLIES 93

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 23 points and six assists in three quarters and Oklahoma City rolled past Memphis.

Rookie Cason Wallace scored a season-high 23 points, Josh Giddey had 16 points and 10 rebounds and Lu Dort scored 14 points and made all four of his 3-point tries for the Thunder. Oklahoma City won its third straight to stay at the top of the Western Conference standings.

The only bad news for the Thunder came when No. 2 scorer Jalen Williams left in the second quarter with a sprained right ankle and did not return. Coach Mark Daigneault offered no update after the game, saying the team would look at it in the morning.

Rookie GG Jackson II scored a season-high 30 points and Jaren Jackson Jr. added 16 for Memphis.

LAKERS 120, TIMBERWOLVES 109

NEW YORK (AP)—The NBA fined Minnesota center Rudy Gobert \$100,000 on Sunday, two days after he implied that referee Scott Foster was not calling games fairly and further suggesting that gambling is having a detrimental impact on the outcome of games.

The fine is the maximum that the NBA could give under terms of the collective bargaining agreement that went



Philadelphia 76ers bench players react during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the New York Knicks in New York, Sunday, March 10, 2024.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Anthony Davis had 27 points, a season-high 25 rebounds and a career-high seven steals while leading Los Angeles over short-handed Minnesota.

Davis added five assists and three blocked shots in one of the most prolific games of his decorated career. The nine-time All-Star feasted on a Minnesota lineup missing its top two big men and four regulars due to injuries, grabbing 21 rebounds in the second half alone and leading a 21-4 rally to begin the fourth quarter while the Lakers pulled away to their 12th win in 17 games.

LeBron James had 29 points, nine assists and eight rebounds, while Austin Reaves added 19 points as the Lakers (36-30) improved to six games above .500 for the first time this season.

Naz Reid scored 25 points and hit five 3-pointers in his first start of the season for Minnesota. Anthony Edwards also scored 25 points for the Wolves, who have lost four of six.

PACERS 111, MAGIC 97

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Tyrese Haliburton and Pascal Siakam each scored 20 points and Indiana beat Orlando to close within a game of the Magic in the Eastern Conference standings.

T.J. McConnell and Obi Toppin each added 17 points for Indiana. Aaron Nesmith had 16.

Paolo Banchero had 19 points for Orlando, Cole Anthony added 16 and Wendell Carter had 13 points and 15 rebounds. The Magic have dropped two in a row for the first time since Jan. 22-26.

ROCKETS 112, KINGS 104

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Fred VanVleet scored 22 points, Jalen Green added 19 and Houston beat Sacramento, but might have lost leading scorer Alperen Sengun to a right knee injury.

Sengun landed awkwardly while challenging a shot by the Kings' Domantas Sabonis with under a minute to play in the fourth. Rockets coach Ime Udoka said after the game that Sengun, who left the court in a wheelchair, was getting an X-ray and he would "know more shortly." ESPN reported that Sengun, averaging a career-high 21.2 points per game, will undergo an MRI on his right knee and ankle Monday.

Sabonis led the Kings with 25 points and 15 rebounds.

BUCKS 124, CLIPPERS 117

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Damian Lillard scored 16 of his

35 points in the fourth quarter of Milwaukee's first victory on its California road trip, beating short-handed Los Angeles.

Lillard hit three of his seven 3-pointers during a stellar shooting display in the fourth, while Giannis Antetokounmpo had 34 points, 10 assists and seven rebounds as the Bucks rebounded from back-to-back losses to Golden State and the Lakers by outlasting the Clippers, who played without Kawhi Leonard and Paul George.

James Harden had 13 points on 5-of-16 shooting and 11 assists while playing without his two superstar teammates, who both sat out the team's second home game in less than 24 hours. Norman Powell scored 20 of his 26 points in the second half for the Clippers, who already were without injured Russell Westbrook.

WIZARDS 110, HEAT 108

MIAMI (AP)—Kyle Kuzma scored 32 points and Washington held on to beat Miami for its second win in a row after ending a 16-game skid.

Corey Kispert finished with 22 points, Deni Avdija added 16 and Tyus Jones had 12 points and 16 assists for the Wizards, who got their first road victory since Jan. 29, end-

ing an eight-game skid away from home.

Kuzma made 12 of 16 free throws and had nine rebounds and four of Washington's 35 assists, four short of a team season high.

Jimmy Butler scored 23 points for the Heat, who lost their third straight and fell to eighth in the East.

PELICANS 116, HAWKS 103

ATLANTA (AP)—Trey Murphy III had 28 points off the bench to help New Orleans

complete a perfect three-game road trip with a win over Atlanta.

Zion Williamson had 27 points, six rebounds and seven assists for the Pelicans, who have won four straight overall and snapped the Hawks' three-game winning streak. Murphy was 6 for 13 from 3-point range and also had seven rebounds.

Bogdan Bogdanovic led the Hawks with 25 points. Dejounte Murray finished with 23 points and 11 assists one game after tying a career high with 41 points.

NETS 120, CAVALIERS 101

CLEVELAND (AP)—Cam Thomas scored 29 points in 31 minutes, Mikal Bridges had 25 points and Brooklyn pulled away to beat injury-riddled Cleveland.

Dennis Schroder added 17 points and eight assists, and Nic Claxton had 16 points and 10 rebounds for Brooklyn, which built a 26-point lead midway through the fourth quarter.

Georges Niang scored 20 points and Jarrett Allen had 15 points and nine rebounds for Cleveland, which fell a half-game behind Milwaukee into third place in the Eastern Conference. Darius Garland had 14 points and five assists for the Cavaliers, who were without Donovan Mitchell (left knee), Evan Mobley (left ankle sprain), Max Strus (right knee strain) and Dean Wade (personal reasons).

NBA announces Phoenix Suns will host 2027 All-Star game

PHOENIX (AP)—The Phoenix Suns will host the 2027 NBA All-Star game, the league announced Thursday, giving owner Mat Ishbia a marquee event for the city roughly one year after he purchased the franchise.

This will be the fourth time Phoenix has hosted the All-Star game and first since 2009. The Suns also hosted in 1975 and 1995.

"We think it's one of the best basketball cities in the whole country," Ishbia said. "We're excited for everyone to come, make it the hub for that weekend, and hopefully make it the most memorable All-Star weekend of all time."

Ishbia agreed to buy the Suns and the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury from the embattled Robert Sarver for about \$4 billion in December 2022 and officially took control a few months later. In his first few days of ownership, Ishbia approved a blockbuster trade to land Kevin Durant, and his big-spending ways have made him popular with fans.

"Our NBA All-Star festivities in 2027 will showcase

Phoenix's love of everything basketball," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said in a statement. "And we couldn't be more excited to work with Mat Ishbia and the entire Suns organization for what promises to be an unforgettable celebration of our sport."

The NBA's All-Star weekend has been a cultural phenomenon for years, even though the game has become less and less competitive. The Eastern Conference beat the Western Conference 211-186 on Feb. 18 in Indianapolis in a game that smashed the All-Star record for points scored.

Even so, the Suns jumped at the chance to host the midseason showcase.

"It's incredibly competitive—every city wants it," Suns and Mercury CEO Josh Bartelstein said. "So we're honored to have it. Now the work really starts."

The 2025 All-Star Game will be in San Francisco while the 2026 game will be in Inglewood, California.

Phoenix also hosts the WNBA All-Star game this summer.

Timberwolves' Gobert fined \$100K for directing 'money sign' gesture toward referee

NEW YORK (AP)—The NBA fined Minnesota center Rudy Gobert \$100,000 on Sunday, two days after he implied that referee Scott Foster was not calling games fairly and further suggesting that gambling is having a detrimental impact on the outcome of games.

The fine is the maximum that the NBA could give under terms of the collective bargaining agreement that went

into place last year, matching the \$100,000 fine given to then-Philadelphia guard James Harden for his public trade demand last fall.

Gobert was called for a technical foul in the closing seconds of regulation Friday night in the Timberwolves' 113-104 overtime loss to the Cleveland Cavaliers when he rubbed his fingers together several times, the so-called money sign that

he directed toward Foster.

"I'll bite the bullet again," Gobert said after that game. "I'll be the bad guy. I'll take the fine, but I think it's hurting our game. I know the betting and all that is becoming bigger and bigger, but it shouldn't feel that way."

The NBA said it found that Gobert directed "an inappropriate and unprofessional gesture toward a game official,

and publicly (criticized) the officiating." In announcing the fine, NBA executive vice president for basketball operations Joe Dumars said it "takes into account Gobert's past instances of conduct detrimental to the NBA with regard to publicly criticizing the officiating."

It is the fourth time Gobert has been fined for public criticism of officials. He is making \$41 million this season.

Joeten Motors offers 2023 Honda Civic Type R for NMC Golf Open



Joeten Motors Saipan has recently announced that it will be offering a brand new 2023 Honda Civic Type R as a hole-in-one prize for Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming Golf Open in March as part of supporting higher education in the CNMI.

"The thrills of the hole-in-one are just the beginning at the NMC Foundation Golf Open, and at Joeten Motors, we're passionate about supporting higher education and the success of the students of the Marianas," said Joeten Motors Saipan vice president/general manager Matthew W. Deets.

"We're excited to contribute a beautiful 2023 Honda Civic Type R, adding another layer of excitement to the event and fostering opportunities for students through the success of the golf open."

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event on March 23 and 24, 2024 at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, and the tournament fee for the 2024



Joeten Motors Saipan has announced that it is offering a brand new 2023 Honda Civic Type R as a hole-in-one prize for the upcoming 19th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Open. In the photo are, from left, NMC employee Casey Huliganga, NMC president Dr. Galvin DeLeon Guerrero, Joeten Motors Service manager Calvin Yamagishi, Joeten Motors Sales manager Ray Alvarez, NMC employee Maia Pangelinan, and Joeten Motors president Somia Quan.

golf open is \$250.

"On behalf of NMC's Foundation, we extend our sincere

appreciation to Joeten Motors for their commitment to higher education in the CNMI.

Their contribution is helping us contribute to a brighter future of our islands," said Ben

Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Like previous tournaments, this upcoming tournament will feature thousands of dollars in amazing prizes such as a 2024 Lexus RX350 from Atkins Kroll, a \$10K Shopping Spree from Top Shelf Wine and Spirits, a \$10,000 cash prize from Ambyth Shipping, a \$10,000 cash prize from Pacifica Insurance, and a \$3,000 cash prize from McDonald's of Saipan.

Interested companies and

individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram ([nmc.proa](https://www.facebook.com/nmc.proa)) or visit www.marianas.edu.

For media inquiries, please email miguel.dandan@marianas.edu. (PR)

JODY

From page 16

a shot but didn't really know anything about who was going to be racing from either Saipan or off-island so it was a really tricky race mentally. Because of that I went off way too hard from the gun (I felt a bit like a startled cat!) and then really had to work to hold on to my form until the turnaround. Then I saw the two guys behind me weren't that far away so I couldn't let up at all," he said of the race.

As for the course and conditions, he said it was "lovely" and really liked that "it wasn't pancake flat, the variation made it interesting and a real challenge." He gave kudos to the organizers for "having all of the races overlapping. It was a great idea. Coming back after the turnaround was fantastic, there were loads of Run Saipan members competing over all the distances so there was a real sense of community and support."

The 39-year-old pastry chef at Hyatt Regency Saipan said he had initially signed up for the full marathon, but once he started planning out the train-

ing, he realized that the timeframe wouldn't be enough to give the marathon his best shot. "Once the sun properly comes up here, I'm still finding it almost too hot to move! So in January, I decided to do the half instead and just give that my best. Looking at the times of the lead guys in the marathon I'm glad I did, they were exceptionally fast times!" he said.

O'Sullivan then said he "absolutely loved" the experience in his first Saipan Marathon as it was "professional"—from when he changed his race to the half, up to the packet pick-up, and to the race day itself.

"There was a great buzz before the start and that kind of carried on into the race. The volunteers were fantastic, there was so much encouragement through every aid station and the police were great. I didn't get a chance to thank the officer whose job it was to drive slowly beside me all the way out and back, I really appreciated the extra safety at the intersections that that provided," said O'Sullivan.

Results of the 10K and 5K divisions will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

TMS

From page 16

By the time the third out was registered, it was too late to close the floodgates as the tides turned in favor of the Tatagas, 9-5. The Hilitais couldn't deliver in their last at-bat and handed the title to the northside.

With Benjamin, Quitano, Macaranas, Aguon, and Sablan in the TMS team were Aaliyah Cosmes, Amaya Ogunoro, Bethany Delos Santos, Ivalynn Farnsworth, Jonielle Pua, Kyria Ngiraked, Neavena Iguel, Precilla Quitagua, Risa Sablan, and Remyann Jose.

The HMS team with Somol, Phylim, Ayuyu, Delos Santos and Esakova were Lailley Teregeyo, Kaeley Schardt, Gretchen Tebit also includes Aubyguel Castro, Mika Dai-kichy, Luwaisor Fitial, Tehani Jolo, Margret Kaipat, Mikalynn Olaitiman, Jeanelle Tibong, and Manyah Villagomez.

Third place went to Mount Carmel School after they dropped the ball against HMS, 8-5.

TMS coach Neil Camacho



LEIGH GASES

Tanapag Middle School gets a close out at second base during the championship game against Hopwood Middle School in the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Capital Hill Softball Field.

said of the championship, "It's honestly amazing to see all our hard work and effort paid off!"

Camacho, who also helped coach the boys team, said that winning both middle school titles feels "surreal." He said, "Back-to-back championships in one school year? I can't wait for what next year has to offer!"

Facing off against HMS in the finals again was a case of déjà vu, said Camacho. With both schools in the finals, just as it was with the boys championship game, Camacho said

it "proves just how much both teams worked to get there—the boys team and the girls!" He added that they changed their strategy in the final three innings to: "let go of the pressure of having to do everything right, and just have fun, show sportsmanship, and play our hearts out the same we do in our own field in TMS."

As for the season and competition, he said that it was a fun and exciting one. "My one hope for next season is to have a bigger turn out of support at

each game. Just like adults, when our team sees that support, they play harder!"

With softball back in schools, he said, "I'm glad it's back! To have all these sports back in full swing and available to all PSS/Private school boys and girls aides in their academic thriving and social emotional growth!"

He then thanked all the parents, family members, community members, their school, and most especially the players for giving it their all. "Everybody who got on the field from the beginning of the season to the end are all winners! And to my players—a huge shout out to them for not giving up and always supporting each other throughout the season. They truly deserved this win and I'm grateful to be a part of the team! Also, a shoutout to my other coaches Mrs. [Felisa] Brel and to one of our players parent Mr. Kennedy Benjamin for always being there to help guide and support our players to the end; and Mrs. Celestial Camacho for being a No. 1 supporter for our TMS players too."

JAPAN'S

From page 16

view at the NMI Soccer Training Center yesterday that he wants to expose the players to other activities that will help them better understand the culture, language, and history of the CNMI.

"It's very important to learn from other countries and people. They should learn the difference

between Japan and other countries, and accept the difference," he said. Sekiguchi added that there are three things he wants to share with the teams that will be training here: That the people are very kind, the CNMI and Japan have a lot of historical ties, and that by being here, they get to spruce up on their English.

In the future, Sekiguchi wants to also potentially host a training camp in the CNMI for Shonan

Bellmare's other age groups.

Shonan Bellmare is a Japanese professional football club based in Hiratsuka, Tokyo, Japan and plays in the J-1 League—Japan's premier pro league. The club also has players in various age groups. They are being trained and groomed to move up to J-1 and J-2 Leagues.

Sekiguchi's last visit to the CNMI was in 2019. During

his tenure, before the NMI Soccer Training Center was built in Koblerville, he said that the teams used to practice at either Hopwood Middle School's field or at the Oleai Sports Complex's field.

With his visit this time around, he is surprised at how big the NMISTC has gotten—with an additional pitch built just last year, making it three pitches in total.



LAO ZHANG

Jody O'Sullivan runs into first place of the half marathon course in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 last Saturday that spanned the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot, to Marpi, and back.



**76ers hold
Knicks to lowest
point total in
NBA this season
in 79-73 win.**

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Saipan Tribune Sports

**Joeten Motors
offers 2023
Honda Civic
Type R for NMC
Golf Open.**

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Jody, Youn Kyung top half marathon

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Irishman Jody O'Sullivan and Korean Youn Kyung Lee topped the half marathon of the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 spanning from the starting line at the Hyatt Regency Saipan parking lot to Marpi and back last Saturday.

With a 5:30am start time, 131 half marathon runners ran the 13.1-mile/21-kilometer course alongside the full course runners through the winding and hilly northside, with O'Sullivan coming in first overall at 1:23:41.



Victor Nash Santos with a time of 1:29:02, followed by third place Jungchul Gong of South Korea at 1:33:31.

Lee was the fastest woman and clocked in with a time of 1:40:11.

Second place was the CNMI's Noriko Jim at 1:45:02, and



LEIGH GASES

Top 3 women's winners of the half marathon course in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 pose for a group photo with Marianas Visitors Authority and Skechers representatives during the awards banquet last Saturday night at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Third from right is third place Jihee Kim, fourth from right is second place Noriko Jim, and fourth from left is first place Youn Kyung Lee.



LEIGH GASES

Top 3 men's winners of the half marathon course in the Skechers Saipan Marathon 2024 pose for a group photo with MVA and Skechers representatives during the awards banquet last Saturday night at the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Third from right is third place Jungchul Gong, center is first place Jody O'Sullivan, and third from left is second place Victor Nash Santos.

third place went to South Korea's Jihee Kim at 1:47:48.

In the men's age division rankings, 14-year-old Cai Ziheng topped the 14U at 1:40:04; Wang Yile came in first in the 18U at 1:40:08; in the men's open, Naoya Kodama was first at 1:40:03; Ryu Minju was first in the 35-39 at 1:55:08; Jongwon Lee clocked in first in the 40-44 at 1:47:27; Dennis Tianzon was first at 2:26:21 in the 45-49; Joo Hun Lee finished first in the 50-54 at 1:38:03; Daniel Marzan was

first in the 55-59 at 2:44:08; and Norlo Jocasalem was first in the 60+ at 2:00:16.

In the women's age division rankings, 14-year-old Shen Zhaoyu was first in the 14U at 3:49:27; Peng Enqi was first in the 18U at 2:04:35; MacKenzie Walker clocked in first in the women's open at 2:02:06; Boeun Kim was first in the 35-39 at 1:50:15; Shawna Brennfleck finished first in the 40-44 at 2:04:34; Kimberlyn King-Hinds was the fastest in the 45-49 at 1:48:43; Chunha

Kim was first in the 50-54 at 2:02:53; and Ikuko Joho came in first in the 60+ at 2:49:26.

On how O'Sullivan felt about coming in first, he said

he was "absolutely delighted" and "happy" as he's earmarked this race from a long way out.

"I thought maybe I'd have

See JODY on Page 15

TMS Tatagas win softball tiara

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Tanapag Middle School Tatagas are the masters of the bat and ball as they have officially secured both the boys and girls middle school slow pitch softball titles.

After their boys team won the championship last January, their girls team won the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 title on a sunny, then rainy, then blazing hot Saturday at the Capital Hill Softball Field.

The Tatagas faced off against No. 2 Hopwood Middle School Hilitais in the finals and won, 9-5, despite the Hilitais striking first.

HMS' Siancy Phylim, Jayla Ayuyu, and Paulette Somol opened the game with three runs over TMS pitcher Kayshlie Aguon. Aguon then registered three outs before HMS could

round the bases again.

In TMS' turn, they failed to produce in the first inning, but came back in the next. Some defensive miscues from HMS' third base allowed TMS to take advantage and run home safely before the defense could catch up to what's happening. As a



result, three runs from Rayven Quitano, Marlaina Benjamin, and Kaya Macaranas scored and the game was tied, 3-3.

HMS then couldn't make contact in the next two innings, so the game was still at a deadlock. However, the

Tatagas gave up two runs in the fourth to Elinie Delos Santos and Alina Esakova, for a 5-3 Hilitais lead.

It wasn't over yet as it was a give and take when TMS' Benjamin's run cut the lead by one, 5-4. Another run by Ziella Sablan tied it up again, 5-5. The Tatagas couldn't bring home their next runners and it was still tied heading into the final innings.

HMS' offense went dark just as TMS exploded with four back-to-back runs in the fifth.

See TMS on Page 15



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Champions Tanapag Middle School Tatagas' girls softball team throws up the No. 1 sign as they pose with their coach Neil Camacho, far left, and head coach Felisa Brel, second from left, during the awards ceremony of the Inaugural SBL-PSS Interscholastic Girls Middle School Slow Pitch Softball League 2023-2024 last Saturday at the Capital Hill Softball Field.

Japan's Shonan Bellmare's U14 girls soccer team looking at training in NMI this summer

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Former NMI National Soccer Team head coach and technical director

Kiyoshi Sekiguchi is on Saipan for two days looking at forging a partnership with the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association to hold training camps for Japan's Shonan Bellmare's U14 girls team.

Sekiguchi coached the CNMI U15 National Team that historically notched

CNMI's first international win after they won against Macau during the 2011 East Asian Football Federation U15 Youth Tournament held in Taipei, Taiwan.

He is now the director of the international department of Shonan Bellmare and has met with NMIFA president Jerry Tan and the rest of the FA yesterday to discuss the partnership for a two-week soccer training camp for the 20-25 players of the U14 girls team either this July or August.

Besides the football camp, Sekiguchi said in an interview

See JAPAN'S on Page 15



LEIGH GASES

Former NMI National Soccer Team head coach and technical director Kiyoshi Sekiguchi, center, is in a two-day visit with the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association to develop a partnership for a training camp for Japan's Shonan Bellmare's U14 girls team this summer. He poses for a photo here with NMIFA's acting technical director, Konomi Suzuki, and CNMI Men's National Team captain Jireh Yobech.